

Education Guide

This guide is designed as a resource for teachers involved in our Primary Schools programme, however it may also be a useful resource for any other schools, teachers or other educational groups, who may or may not have visited this exhibition. You can adapt the ideas presented to suit the age and understanding of your students.

Using the images shown here and the links to other websites you and your class can explore this exhibition, James L. Hayes's work in general, and related themes and topics from the classroom to develop your own project based on the themes raised and artistic approaches used. James L. Hayes is an Irish artist based in Cork, he is a lecturer in Fine Art at CIT Crawford College of Art.

The Essence of Taste by James L. Hayes



Looking into the light of dark matters, James L. Hayes, Cast bronze and wax multiples, welded steel and digital video and sound projection, 2010

This exhibition shows three pieces of work by James L. Hayes, one in each room in the gallery. His work is multi-disciplinary, meaning that he uses a number of different techniques and materials to explore his chosen themes. His work researches issues related to environmental and economic conflict, and often features casting (taking the form of an object and recreating it in a different material, often metal) and multiples (many copies of an object within one piece of work).

He is interested in the process of making the work. This means that the ideas he works with, lead him to try out working with different materials and techniques, and that the process of physically making the work, how and why it is made, is as important to him as the end result.

Gallery 1

Gallery 1 features an installation called *Looking into the light of dark matters*. Whereas a sculpture would be an object that may be shown within the gallery room, an installation means that the whole room is transformed using a number of different elements that all work together to create the piece of work.

The elements that make up *Looking into the light of dark matters* are; cast objects, a film projection, and sound. The cast objects are replicas of polystyrene model planes, one is cast in bronze and the others are cast in wax that is coloured black by waste oil from real aeroplanes. They are mounted on steel structures that look like pylons or oil derricks. Projected past these planes onto the wall behind, is a film of windmills, turning slowly. The sound element is the drone of a propeller turning.

This piece of work makes lots of connections and comparisons between the different elements within it, the materials and the ideas behind it. The title echoes the contrast between light and dark present in the work. The dark industrial looking pylons contrast with the clean, white windmills, both common structures in the landscape. The glossiness and permanence of the bronze plane, contrasts with the dark, soft, wax planes. Planes and wind turbines both make use of the propeller we can hear, but in opposite ways – one draws in air, the other expels it. The oil added to the wax is the dark, heavy, industrial past, or waste, of energy production, which we rely on for the aviation industry. The windmills represent the clean, light, environmentally friendly energy production of the future. Even the room itself contains this contrast between the light from the projector and the darkness of the blacked-out room. The light from the projector glistens off the planes and casts shadows.

What other kinds of structures do we see in the sky, or standing in the landscape?

Can you find out more about propellers and how they work?



The Essence of Taste, James L. Hayes, Cast iron, bronze, soil, electrical motors, pumps & sprayer, stainless steel & filtrated asparagus essence & ethanol, 2012

Gallery 2

The installation in Gallery 2, *The Essence of Taste* is a new piece of work created for this exhibition. Continuing the connections, made in *Looking into the light of dark matters* between the environment, industry and the economy, this piece addresses the agricultural industries, our relationship to food and the land, and the processes with which our food is grown, delivered and digested.

A 'field' of crops has been constructed within the gallery. Cast iron and cast bronze asparagus spears grow up from a circular base of soil on the gallery floor. A mechanical mechanism reminiscent of a crop sprayer is placed in the centre, and working on a sensor, sprays the asparagus spears.

Asparagus is a spring vegetable much of which is imported in this country. Imported vegetables are a luxury of the modern world, expensive and environmentally damaging due to the so called 'food miles' involved in their transport by air, an industry that *Looking into the light of dark matters* has already addressed. The crop spraying mechanism reminds us of the dependence of the agricultural industry on chemical sprays to produce our food, another environmental consideration.

This spray however is made from something more natural. One of the interesting things about asparagus is the effect it has on the body; when you eat asparagus it makes your urine smell different to normal. This is a very clear example of how the food we eat directly affects our bodies. The artist has worked with a technician to create a sterile essence of the filtrated urine of a person who has eaten asparagus, carried by ethanol. It is sprayed onto the cast iron and cast bronze asparagus spears using an atomised spraying device. This spray will, over the weeks of the exhibition, interact with the cast metal, as it settles onto it, changing its colour.

As with the installation in Gallery 1, this artwork reveals lots of connections and comparisons. The artist is contrasting the natural with the manmade, he has taken a vegetable and made it out of metal, and he has used a natural waste product of the human body to create a sterile essence reminiscent of manmade chemicals. It focuses on process. The processes of growing food, transporting food and eating food, the scientific process of creating the asparagus essence and the process of the essence interacting with the metal.

What vegetables do you like to eat?

Where do they come from? What shape are they? What do they do to your body?

Have you ever seen the different kinds of machinery, around in the landscape, which are used in growing crops? What do they look like? What do they do?



Bill and Annie, James L. Hayes, Dual HD Digital Film /Projection 42 mins, 2012

Gallery 3

The split-screen digital projection in Gallery 3 takes a different turn. Made this summer during a stay in Denver, Colorado, in the U.S. *Bill and Annie* explores the origins of the idea of celebrity in American culture, and the myths and stories of the American West.

A split-screen digital projection means the artist created two films that are then projected alongside each other, and run at the same time. These two films feature a husband and wife who are impersonators of two famous figures from American Wild West history - Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley. As impersonators, they perform across the US, dressed in historically accurate costume, impersonating Bill and Annie's accents and language, and know all there is to know about their lives and history.

For this artwork the impersonators are each filmed separately, speaking as Bill and Annie, discussing their life, how they came to be famous, and what affect that had on them. When one person is speaking the other remains quiet, whilst still being filmed. Behind them are framed pictures of other people who we presume also have their own stories.

They are not professional actors, and while telling their characters' stories they seem both confident and awkward. They make us think about both the character they are impersonating and who they are as real people, who devote so much time and energy to someone else's life story.

A second film, *Cody*, shown on a small screen in the same gallery, again features the Buffalo Bill impersonator. This time he poses for us in the woods, surveying the scene around him and letting off the occasional shot from his gun. Do you know any of any interesting characters from Irish history, a celebrity, or from your locality whose story you could find out about? How did they talk and dress? What do you know about their life? What would it be like to meet them and talk to them?

Further discussion and research

Explore some of the different ways that industry and agriculture affect our environment and landscape. Find out about:

- § The different types of structures we see in the landscape,
- § The mechanical and chemical processes we use for growing crops
- § The idea of 'food miles' and how our food is grown and transported to our supermarkets, compare this to the food we find in Farmers' Markets
- § Which of the foods that we eat are grown in Ireland and which are imported from other places?

Explore different forms of energy production and the pros and cons of each, how do they work, what effects do they have on the landscape and environment? Look at solar, wind and wave power, fossil fuels, oil, coal and gas, nuclear energy.

Find out about propellers, what they are, how they work, and the different things we use them for.

Research the process of metal casting and how sculptures are cast in bronze or iron. Look into the history of this process. It has been used for thousands of years. Look at other artists who have used bronze casting to create sculptures, like the Renaissance sculptor Donatello or the 20th century sculptor Alberto Giacometti.

Find out about different materials and how they react differently. Look at how iron turns to rust, and why copper goes green. Find out about the different melting temperatures of different materials. Try putting discoloured cent coins into Coca Cola overnight, to see how it brings back the shine. Can you figure out a way to only submerge half the coin so that only half changes colour? Think about other things that change colour- like leaves in the autumn, how does that happen?

Explore what eating different types of food does to our bodies. Which vitamins and minerals do they give us, what benefit do these have on our health? Which foods or drinks keep us awake and give us energy? This could be combined with learning about the food pyramid and healthy eating.

Talk about distinctive smells. Smell is closely linked to memory, are there particular smells that remind you of something. What are your favourite smells?



Cody, James L. Hayes, 2012

Find out more about the stories and characters of the [American Wild West](#), try looking up some of the people mentioned in *Bill and Annie*, like Sitting Bull, General Custer or Wild Bill Hickock.

Bill mentions some of the 'new inventions' at the time, like electric light. Talk about what must it have been like to travel with a show to Europe in those times. How different it must have seemed to the world they knew in America, and how long would it have taken to travel?

Explore famous characters from Irish History, or from your own locality, how did they talk? How did they dress? What stories would they have told? Or explore someone else famous that interests you and find out about his or her life. Are there particular things that might represent this person, particular objects or particular things that happened to them that you could use to make an artwork about them?

Find out about other artists who make multi disciplinary installations or who use multiples in their work like Antony Gormley and his [field sculptures](#)

Practical ideas for the classroom

After exploring some of the themes mentioned above you can use some of the images or ideas from these themes to make your own artwork in the classroom based around some of the approaches James L. Hayes uses. Work with themes to do with food and farming, or mechanical structures in the landscape, or characters from history and their stories.

Casting and working with multiples

In the classroom we often work with multiples, without even realising it, when everyone in the class makes the same thing and these are all displayed together, creating a bigger impact than if they were displayed individually. If you

are working in this way, draw the children's attention to the fact that the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

If everyone in the class makes the same thing out of clay, they will not be identical, but could be very similar. Try making vegetables, or simple aeroplanes, or use an object that represents something to you, or to a character you've been researching, like Buffalo Bill with his gun or his cowboy hat.

If you want to try casting, to make identical copies, you can find detailed instructions on making basic plaster molds using clay, plaster of paris and Vaseline [here](#) You can also use a substance called alginate instead of plaster, which is the same stuff that dentists use to make molds of your mouth, and is flexible, quick drying and easy to work with (see [here](#))

It is probably best to get children working on creating one cast between two or three. Once you have made a mold you can make multiple casts of the mold to have multiple sculptures of the same thing. Alternatively you can use bought molds, and make multiple casts from them.



The Essence of Taste, James L. Hayes, Cast iron, bronze, soil, electrical motors, pumps & sprayer, stainless steel & filtrated asparagus essence & ethanol, 2012

Making molds can be quite complex. For a simpler activity for younger children you can make a clay relief by preparing clay slabs and asking the children to push objects into the clay to make the shape of the object in it. They can do this a number of times if the object is small enough and the clay slab large enough. Plaster of paris can then be poured into these to make a relief shape (half of the object with a flat back or base). You then have the concave shape, in the clay slab and the convex shape made of plaster.

Choose objects that have a distinctive, simple shape that will be recognisable. Let the clay slabs and plaster casts dry and they can paint them afterwards, or fill them with glue and add glitter for a shiny effect.

Try out different ways of arranging all the multiples together to make an installation;

§ Use strong lights to cast shadows on them.

§ Paint them in different colours, or like James L. Hayes' aeroplanes make them all the same except one so it stands out.

§ 'Plant' them in rows or drills, like the asparagus

Using print or collage to create multiple 2d images

Spend time discussing a theme, and doing drawings of images connected to that theme, based around a story, or a famous person's life, or to do with food, or farming, or energy and machinery. When they have drawings to work from you can create multiple prints, or collages.

Repeating shapes through collage;

Use these drawings to create simple silhouette shapes and cut them out. It sometimes takes time to get children to understand the idea of a silhouette shape and how it needs to be recognisable only from the outline. Working with shadows can sometimes help to explain this.

Once they have cut the silhouette out once, it can be traced around, like a stencil, onto different paper over and over again and cut out. They can then use these shapes to arrange together into a collage. Use different tones, colours and textures of paper to make it more interesting. Give them different finishes, try covering one in tinfoil to make it shiny, or glue on rice to make it rough, or felt or cloth to give it a softer look.

If they use card instead of paper to cut out the repeat shapes you can stand them up together, by gluing small triangular stands to the back, or create a mobile by hanging them from the ceiling, then they could decorate each side using opposite colours, or black and white, or different textures.

In the autumn you can create collages exploring colour change by collecting the autumn leaves and collaging them in repeating patterns, showing all the different colours.

A simple method of creating repeating block prints:

Use polystyrene or foam sheets, give each child a small piece and ask them to draw into the surface using a pencil or pen to gouge a line. They could also cut out the outline or silhouette of a shape from the foam and use it as a stamp.

Use a roller to apply water-based printing ink or paint, or dip the foam block into paint that has been spread thinly onto a palette or plate. Then press firmly onto the page, without moving it around, and remove. It can be used over and over again to create a pattern.

Think about how you arrange your multiple prints together and what colours you use – will they all be the same, or some light and some dark?

You can also make repeating texture prints in the same way by rolling paint onto leaves, or flat surfaces of cut vegetables or fruit with interesting shapes (peppers, or apples, or cabbage leaves).

Construction

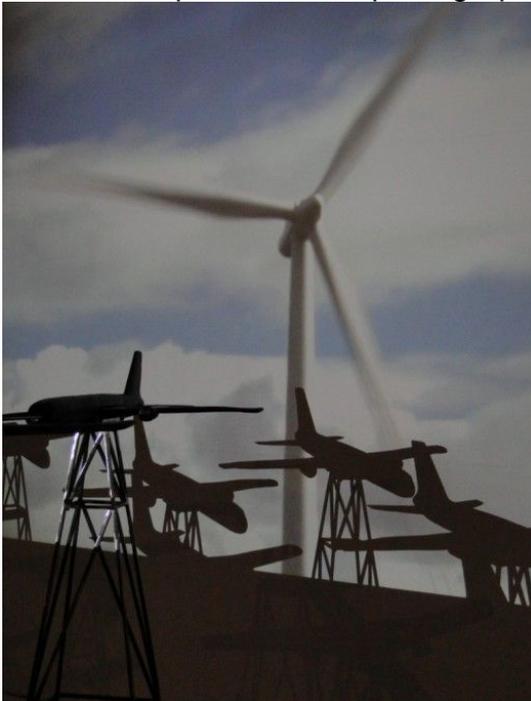
Use card or foam sheets to construct your own industrial or agricultural mechanism or structure that you might find in the landscape, it could be based on something real or it could be imaginary. Join flat pieces of card or foam by cutting slits and inserting pieces together, or use glue or tape.

Create pylon shapes by cutting out three or four triangles, cutting holes out of them, and constructing them into a pyramid.

Try making your own moving mechanism. Small models like this with moving parts are sometimes called automata. You can find out more about them [here](#)

Working with shadows - drawing and construction

You will need a strong directional spotlight in the classroom– like a desk light or strong torch. Collect objects that make interesting shapes, or use some of the cut outs or shapes you may have made in the collage and construction ideas above. Draw the blinds in the classroom to make the shadows stronger and ask the group to arrange these in front of the strong light, to create interesting shapes. Give each child charcoal and white paper, and ask them to draw the shadow shapes. You can photograph the shadow shapes too.



Looking into the light of dark matters, James L. Hayes, Cast bronze & wax multiples, welded steel & digital video & sound projection, installation shot, WCAC, 2012

Artists Sue Noble and Tim Webster create amazing shapes using shadows from found objects, you can see some of their work [here](#)

Colour and Materials

In James's artwork the materials he uses are important, and add meaning to the work, be it bronze, iron or wax for casting, or aviation oil used to colour the wax planes.

Try using vegetables and foodstuffs to create colour instead of paint, beetroot, tea and coffee, mustard, blackberries, curry powder or cocoa. Mix dry powders with a little water and mix to a paint-like consistency.

Portraits – drawing, film or photography

Try getting the children to draw a double portrait of two characters from history, or from a story you've read that are connected to one another. Think about what they would look like, what they would wear, where they would be. In Bill and Annie the artist has them standing and posing, or sitting and talking, get the children to consider what the characters should be doing in their portrait. Consider composition, will they be facing each other, or looking away, will they be central or off to one side?

Does someone you know have an interesting life story; perhaps there is an older person in your area who would have a lot of stories to tell about their life. If you have use of a video camera you could ask them to come into class and agree to be filmed talking about their life. The children could operate the camera, and ask questions like an interview to prompt the subject. Or the children could dress up and film each other impersonating famous people. They would need to investigate everything about that person's life, and how they look, talk, dress etc.

They could also use photography to create double or single portraits of real people, or themselves impersonating. In order to make the most of working with photography in this way make sure they spend time planning their shoot, working in small groups, before giving them the camera. They will need to consider background, costume, composition, props, lighting etc.



Bill and Annie, James L. Hayes, Dual HD Digital Film /Projection 42 mins, 2012

Costumes – fabric and fibre

Think about the different kind of clothes people wore in times of the American Wild West; cowboy hats, fringing, medals, neckties, chaps and boots. It is easy to make some of these things in the classroom and get the children to dress up as if they're from a Wild West show. Ask them to bring in an old shirt or jacket, perhaps one Dad doesn't want anymore, or from a charity shop in quite a plain,

pale colour.

Using coloured felt cut slits $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way, every $\frac{1}{2}$ cm or so to make fringing. They can attach this onto the sleeves or the hem of the shirt either by sewing or gluing with PVA glue. They can make medals by cutting out cardboard circles and covering them with tin foil or painting them gold or silver then gluing them onto a piece of ribbon and pinning them onto the shirt. They can decorate the shirt by drawing patterns onto it in marker pens, or gluing on cut out felt shapes or making print patterns using the print blocks suggested above.

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